

A
SERMON,
CONCERNING
The Strangeness, Frequency, and
Desperate Consequence
OF
Impenitency:

Preached at

WHITE - H A L L,

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(Soon after the great Plague)

BY

SETH then Lord Bishop of EXON.

L O N D O N:

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A SERMON,

Containing
The Strangeness, Frequency, and
Desperate Consequence
OF
IMPENITENCY.

Revel. 9. 20.

*And the rest of the men, which were
not killed by the plagues, yet re-
pent not of the works of their
hands.*



Although I am not with-
out apprehension, that
the frequencie of pe-
nitential discourses,
and the seeming easi-
ness of repentance may indispose

Y 2

some

some persons for such an attention as is necessary both to speaker and hearers, for a due performance of the Offices, which we are about; yet I shall not spend time in making Apologies for the Argument, which I have chosen.

Among all the aggravations of our sins, there is none more heinous, than the frequent hearing of our duty: Among all the errors of our lives, there is none more fatal, than that concerning the easiness of the duty of Repentance.

To discover the fallacy, and to prevent the dangerous consequences of this imagination, I have chosen at this time to treat of this instructive instance: of the Text.

If Repenrance were so easie as is imagined, why did not these men repent, that are mentioned in the words, which I have read?

They had not only the Dictates of Nature, and the advantage of the Scriptures to move them to it; they had the Ministry of Angels to perswade them; they had Thunders and Trumpets to awaken them, and rouze them up: they had signs and wonders in the heaven above, and in the earth below: they had providential instances of prodigious judgments, and wonderful mercies.

They were spectators of grievous Plagues brought upon their neighbours; they were Monuments of singular mercies and

deliverances a long time continued to themselves.

When thousands fell beside them, they were a remnant kept alive; when others were destroyed, they were preserved; for experiment, to try whether yet they would repent.

I say the persons in the Text were *οἱ λοιποὶ*, *the rest* of the men that were not killed by those Plagues: *And the rest of the men that were not killed, yet repented not of the works of their hands.*

My endeavours at this time will be, by shewing the danger and fatal consequences of impenitence, to move my self and others to repent. And to determine precisely who these persons were, of what Nation, of what Church, of what condition,

tion, in what time they lived, what were the Plagues brought upon them, when and how they were executed, and such other particulars, I am no way obliged by the design which I have propounded.

About these particulars Expositors extremely differ; in this they all agree, that they had the advantage of the Scriptures to bring them to repentance.

Whatever is the exact, either *liberal* liberal, or mystical meaning of this vision of the seven Angels, and the seven Trumpets; and of that lofty tragical Scheme, wherein it is represented, thus much is evident, that notwithstanding all Gods dealings with men to bring them to repentance, they will sometimes continue in impenitence,

penitence, and that this is an horrible provocation.

The words which I have chosen contain the sad result of the labours of six Angels, the warning of six Trumpets, the operation of six Plagues, and six Deliverances.

And they are the common node, or term, connecting the Antecedent parts of the vision (beginning at the 8th. Chapter) with the Catastrophe thereof (delivered in the 10th.)

They are to be considered two ways.

I. Ab-

- 1 { Absolutely, where we have
 - 1 { Matter, containing the character of their persons described by
 - 1 { Gods dealing with them: not killed ; remnant of others killed ; killed by grievous plagues.
 - 2 { Their dealings with God: repented not; not of the works of their hands; worship of Devils, Idols, (first Table :) Sorceries, Murthers, Fornications, Thefts, (second Table.)
 - 2 { Form and manner : in the form of an *Epiphonema*, express'd by the particle, *yet*, repetible upon every part of their character, (not killed, yet repented not; yet repented not of the works of their hands.)

Yet is vox { *Admirantis,*
Accingentis ad vindictam;

It first implies the strangeness of the case, and secondly, the desperateness of the provocation : for the words are to be considered not only absolutely ; but also
- 2 Relatively ; as they look backward and forward ; and are the connexion of the Antecedent parts of the Vision with the Catastrophe. Six Angels sounded six Trumpets, and executed six Judgements; yet they repented not--- *They repented not, and the seventh Angel sounded and swore, that time (i.e. Time of repentance, & respite of vengeance should be no longer.*

The

The words thus resolved would afford many considerable observations ; I shall take up three that lye uppermost.

1. From the form and manner of the words (as they are an *Epiphonema* expressing a kind of wonder, and admiration) I shall observe the strangeness of the impenitency, of such men as these, considered in common reason.

2. From the matter of them, I shall observe the frequency of such impenitencie in common experience.

3. From the relative consideration of the words (as they connect the Catastrophe of the Vision with the Antecedent parts of it) I shall observe the lamentable consequence of this impenitency : And

4. Con-

4. Conclude with a few words of Application.

I. First then to bring to our apprehension the strangeness of impenitencie of such men as these (considered in *Thesi*, and in *Theory*) it will be needful only to reflect upon the causes of admiration, and to lay before you some of their advantages, and Motives to Repentance.

Things wonderful in their nature are those, whose causes are unsearchable; things strange and admirable to common reason are such as happen contrary to the Laws of Nature, and of Reason.

From the former cause the motion of the heavens is wonderful; from the latter it was prodigious and admirable, that *the sun stood still in Gibeon, and the moon*

moon in the valley of Ajalon.

That God should take advantage upon the lapsed Angels, that upon their offence he should bind them up in chains, that he should exclude them from the benefit of Repentance, and reserve them to the Judgement of the Great Day.

That he should allow this privilege to lapsed men; that he should reveal himself to them; that he should make them understand their duty, and their interest; that he should set before them good and evil, happiness and misery, the desire and the detestation of humane nature; that he should by all means court and wooe them to that which all men naturally desire; and discourage, and divert them from that which they naturally abhor;

horr: That after all this he should not prevail in such a case as this; that they should scornfully reject the end of all their hopes; that they should studiously pursue the object of all their fears; This is that rational wonder that I am now to lay before you.

To manifest this wonder a little more explicitly, let us consider the advantages of Nature, and the Motives from Scripture to bring men to repentance.

The grounds and fundamental elements of the Doctrine of Repentance are these. The Being & Attributes of God; The immortality of the Souls of men; The principles of *Synteresis*; The terrours of natural Conscience; The forecasts of vengeance; The apprehension and desire of an

an Attonement : And all these are manifest from the Dictates and discoveries of the Light of Nature.

Psal. 19 *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work : They speak it loud, they spread it largely, they proclaim it constantly, Their sound is gone out into all the world ---there is no speech, or language, but their voice is heard among them.*

Rom. 1. 20. *The invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen ;--- even his eternal power and God-head.*

Act. 14. 17. *Concerning his providence in governing the world, St. Paul tells the men of Lystra, and the Priest of Jupiter, that he did not leave himself without witness amongst the Heathen.*

The

The whole earth is full of his righteousness, and all the people see his glory : So that a man shall Psal. 97. 6.
say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous, doubtless there is a God, that judgeth the earth.

He is not far from any one of us ; Act. 17. 28.
in whom we live and move, and have our being.

He is the Father of Spirits, Heb. 12. 9.
and we are his off-spring. Surely Act. 17. 28.
there is a spirit within a man, and Job 32. 8.
that spirit immortal, deriving from Him, who only hath immor- 1 Tim. 6. 16.
tality.

And these things have asserted themselves with so great evidence, that they have been generally acknowledged by all sorts of heathen Authors, Philosophers, Historians, Orators and Poets.

Moreover, they shew the Law Rom. 2. 15.
 (of

(of *Synteresis*) written in their hearts ; they have consciences accusing, or excusing ; they find themselves concluded under sin, and are perplexed and tormented under the apprehensions of an offended God.

For Conscience condemned by its own witness is very timorous, and always fore-casteth grievous things.

Tacit.

The starting of *Alexander*, when he had killed his friend ; and of *Nere*, when he had destroyed his mother : The confusions of *Tiberius*, when he wrote from *Caprea* to the Senate concerning the death of *Sejannus* : The foretastes of an avenging *Nemesis* described by heathen Orators, and Historians : The passions ascribed to *Medea*, and *Hercules*, and *Orestes*, &c. by the Poets : The
rites

Rites and Sacrifices of all the Pagan world: The prodigious ways of expiations devised to make their attonement with their imaginary Deities offended: They were all of them the products of natural Conscience, exerting it self in such a disquisition, as is delivered by the Prophet; *Wherewithal shall I come before the Lord, or bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? will the Lord be pleased with thousands* Mic. 6. 6. *of rams, or ten thousand rivers of oyl? shall I give my first-born for my transgression? the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?*

All these, and many more are the Indications of Nature; the incitements and provocations of

Z

natur-

natural Conscience to bring men to repentance.

* Grot.
Dr. Ham.

But beside these common Motives, the persons of the Text (whether they were the* Jews, and Inhabitants of *Jerusalem* at the time of the destruction of it by *Titus* and *Vespasian*, or any that called themselves Christians) they had a clearer, and more glorious light to guide them; they had far more efficacious, and noble Motives to lead and urge them to repentance, the Light and Motives of the Holy Scriptures.

There it is, that the Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness, and Severity of God are gloriously displayed; the immortal Nature, and sinful condition of the souls of men; the rewards and punishments of this life, and
of

of the world to come are clearly discovered.

The elements of the Doctrine of Repentance, the Motives to it are there explained and applied, mixt and combined a 1000 several ways.

The Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament, are nothing else but a Systeme of various powerful Methods to bring men to repentance.

This is the general aim, and common scope of all the Doctrines, the Histories, the Logick, and Rhetorick of the Book of God.

This was Noah's Text upon which he preached to the old world 120 years: Upon this errand God sent all the Prophets, rising early, and sending them; they said, Turn again now every

1 Pet. 3.
20.

Jer. 7. 24.

one from his evil way.

Math. 3. 2. *This was the message of him that was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand. Our Lord Christ, and his seventy Disciples, and his twelve Apostles, they all with one voice insisted upon this Theme; and when the Holy Ghost himself descended, he likewise drove at*

Marc. 6. 12. *this conclusion; Repent therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the time of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.*

Act. 3. 19.

The time would fail me, if I should attempt in any measure to lay before you the declarations, promises, threatnings, exhortations, dehortations, reasonings, expostulations, instances of mercies, and of judgements delivered

in the Scriptures to bring men to repentance.

To this end God hath declared himself, *slow to anger, gracious and merciful*; He hath said, ^{Pfal. 145. 8.} that *he would have no man perish*; ^{2 Pet. 3. 9.} He hath sworn that *he doth not desire the death of the wicked*, ^{Ezek. 33. 11.} but *had rather that he should turn and live*.

He considers our frame, and his ^{Pfal. 103. 14.} ways are equal: He is ready to ^{Ezek. 33. 17.} pardon; to pardon iniquity, transgression and sin; though they are ^{Ifai. 1. 18.} as scarlet, to make them white as snow; if they be a cloud, to scatter them like a cloud. ^{Ifai. 44. 22.} Wherefore ^{Ifai. 55. 7.} let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous his imaginations, and return unto the Lord.

On the other side, to break the hardness of the hearts of men,

to rouse them up from their impenitency, he declares his justice, and asserts his propriety in

Rom. 12. vengeance; *Vengeance is mine,*
12. *and I will repay it.* He protests,

Nah. 1. 3. that he will by no means acquit

Hab. 1. 13. the guilty; that he is of purer

Psal. 58. eyes, than to behold iniquity; that

21. he will wound the head of his ene-

mies, and the hairy scalp of such

an one as goes on still in his wick-

edness.

Psal. 7. 10. If a man will not turn, he
will whet his sword, and bend
his bow.

If a Nation will not repent,
Ezek. 6. then smite with thy hand, & stamp
11. with thy foot, and say, alas! for
it shall fall by the sword, by the
famine, and by the pestilence.

Now the general inference of
all these is still the same;
this is still the Logick of the
Scriptures;

Scriptures: *Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence--- wherefore consider this ye that forget God. We must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ-- Knowing therefore the terrour of the Lord we perswade.*

Pfal. 50. 3.

Pfal. 50.

22.

Rom. 14.

10.

2 Cor. 5.

11.

To this end we find the Lord sometimes disputing logically to convince, and sometimes with divine and noble Oratory endeavouring to perswade; sometimes by signal instances of pardoning mercies, and of avenging judgements to induce men to repentance.

He speaks to their reason, to their affections, to their very senses, πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτεγῆτως.

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord, if ye be willing, and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; if ye rebel,

Isai. 1. 18.

Ezek. 18. *ye shall be devoured. Are not
29. my ways equal? are not your ways
unequal? Again,*

He expostulates with them
sometimes upon the principles of
Jer. 2. 5. *ingenuity: Thus saith the Lord,
- What iniquity have your fathers
found in me, that they are gone a-
way from me? O my people, what
have I done unto thee? wherein
Mic. 6. 3. have I wearied thee? Testifie a-
gainst me, O Israel; what doth
the Lord thy God require of thee?*

Sometimes he expostulates up-
Jer. 4. 14. *on the point of interest; How
- long shall vain thoughts lodge
Prov. 1. in your hearts? How long ye sim-
22. ple ones will ye love simplicity?
Jer. 5. 31. what will ye do in the end
thereof?*

Again, he sets before us a mul-
titude of glorious instances to
shew that never any penitent was
rejected,

rejected, however heinous, however numerous were their sins. The prodigal *devoured his substance with harlots*: Mary Magdalen *had seven Devils*: Peter denied his Master *with horrid oaths, and imprecations*: Saul was *exceedingly mad against him*; yet upon their repentance were accepted. A& 26.
11.

He had delivered Israel seven times, and they forsook him; and he said, *he would deliver them no more*; but they repented, and his soul was straight-way grieved, and he delivered them. Jud. 10.
10, &c.

Instead of many, consider that one instance of Manasses, the evil son of good King Hezekiah: He *set up altars for Baalim, and worshipp'd all the host of heaven*: *Altars in the court of the temple; an idol in the very temple*; he *caused* 2 Chron.
33.

caused his sons to pass through the fire; he observed times, used incantments, dealt with familiar spirits, and with wizards; made Judah, and Jerusalem to do worse than the heathen. And the Lord spake to him, and he would not hear. After all this, in his afflictions he humbled himself, and then God was intreated, and heard his supplication.

Isa. 55.8.

His ways are not as our ways: He forgave Nineveh, and Jonah was displeased exceedingly; he taxes him with easiness in relenting, he charges him as if he had an ancient known infirmity of flexibility to his veracity, and the honour of his Prophets: Lord (saith he) was not this my saying? and therefore I prevented it to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that thou art merciful; -- therefore take, I beseech

Jon. 4.2.

beseech thee, my life from me.

His thoughts are not as our thoughts: when Nathan had told David a story of a poor man, who had his ewe Lamb ravished from him, then David was exceeding wroth, and he swore, As ^{2 Sam. 12.} the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely dye: But when David, who had taken Bathsheba, and murdered Uriah, said, I have sinned; Nathan said unto David, The Lord hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not dye.

On the other side, we have instances of horrible judgements for Impenitency; whereof I shall after take occasion to speak.

Now considering all these things, is it not strange, that men should not repent? That no consideration of ingenuity, or of
in-

interest should move them to it ? That neither the Law written in their hearts, nor that which was delivered by the mediation of Angels, nor the Gospel given us by the Son of God should bring them to it ? That neither reason, nor experience ; neither mercies nor judgements ; neither the sweetness of a good conscience, nor the torments of a bad ; the beauties of vertue, nor the deformity of sin ; the shortness of life, nor length of eternity ; the lightness of things present, nor the *exceeding weight* of those which are to come ? That neither Death nor Life, nor Angels, nor Trumpets ; *nor things present, nor thing to come ; nor height nor depth, nor any other thing should be able to separate men from the love of sin ?*

Is it not strange ? The Apostles, the Prophets were astonished at this ; nay, God himself seems to be affected with wonder : *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth ! Be astonished, O ye heavens, and be horribly afraid ; they have forsaken me.* Isai. i. 2. Jer. 2. 12.

This is that wonder considered in it self according to common reason, the object of our first observation , drawn from the form and manner of the words by way of *Epiphonema*, expressed by the particle *yet* ; yet *they repented not.*

II. The second Observation was taken from the matter of the words : However such impenitency is very strange to common reason (considered in the Theory) yet it is too frequent in practice, and in common experience ;

ence : *The rest of the men repented not.*

This is that grand contradiction, that fatal paradox of the life of man : His very being consists in rationality ; his acting is contrary to all the reason in the world : Man only was created under the Law of Reason ; man only maintains a constant opposition to the law and reason of his creation.

Psal. 104.
19.

He appointed the moon for certain seasons, and the sun knoweth his going down. The blustering winds, the raging storms, the unruly Ocean ; the Lyon, the Tiger, and the Bear, these all pursue the law of their creation, these all are obedient unto his word ; charmed to it by that powerful voice, whereby they were created.

Psal. 148.
8.

Man

Man only stops his ears, and refuses *to hear the voice of this Almighty charmer ; charm he never so wisely, so loudly, or so variously.*

The general ways and methods of his charming have been already mentioned ; I am now to lay before you the general success of those methods : The success

1. Of his word, and his messengers.

2. Of his works of $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 1. \text{ Mercy,} \\ 2. \text{ Judgement,} \end{array} \right. \left. \begin{array}{l} \} \} \text{ Single,} \\ \} \} \text{ Intermixed.} \end{array} \right.$

1. For the success (or rather the unsuccessfulness) of his word, for the entertainment (or rather the barbarous usage) of his messengers ; how often do we find God, and his Prophets, Christ and his Apostles complaining
and

and, as it were, fretting themselves with indignation?

As for the word, sometimes they will not hear it. More than seven times *Jeremy* complains almost in the very same words:

Jer. 7. 21. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, since the day that your fathers came forth of the land of Egypt until this day, I have sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily, rising early and sending them; yet they hearkned not to me, nor inclined their ear.

Matth. 11. 17. Whereunto shall I liken this generation? I have piped---

Ezek. 33. 12. Sometimes they hear it as a song: Loe thou art unto them as a very lovely song.

Jer. 44. 16. Sometimes they refuse it positively: They say to the Seers, see not; and to the Prophets, prophesie not unto us. As for the word of
the

the Lord, which thou hast spoken in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee.

They endeavour to suppress, and to destroy it. When *Jehudi* had read three or four leaves in *Jeremies* roll, he cut it with a pen-knife, and cast it into the fire, until all the roll was consumed in the fire. Jer. 36. 20.

Instead of faith and obedience, it meets with infidelity, and atheistical opposition, and contradiction: *Who hath believed our report?* saith one; *All the day long have I stretch'd forth my hands to a gain-saying people,* is the complaint of another. Esa. 53. 1.
Esa. 65. 2.

They say unto God, depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of his ways. Speak to them in the name of Lord, they say, *Who is the Lord, that I should* Job 21.
Exod. 5. 4.

A a fear

fear him? discourse to them of the Almighty, they say, What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? What can the Almighty do? What profit shall we have if we pray unto him?

Speak to them of God's searching Eye; Surely, say they, God sees it not; Tush, God cares not for it: of his over-ruling Providence; nay, say they, but all things come alike to all; there is one event to the just, and to the unjust.

Tell them they must appear before the Judgment-seat of God, and of Christ; they scoffingly reply, Where is the Promise of his coming? since the Fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were before. Where is the God of Judgment? let him make speed, and hasten his work, that

that we may see it. This is the general entertainment of their message; and for the persons of the Messengers, they devise *de-* Jer. 18. 18, *vices against them*; they smite them with the smiting of the tongue; they threaten them, they beat them sometime, they take away their Liberty, and sometime their Lives; this was the portion of *Jeremiah*; the men of Jer. 11. 22, *Anathoth sought his life, saying, Prophecy not by the Name of the Lord, that thou die not by our hand. They charged him falsely, they smote him, they imprisoned* Jer. 37. 13, 38, 6, 9, *him in the house of Jonathan; they cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah; they let him down with chords into the mire.*

What do I instance in one particular; since at once we read the general entertainment of the

Prophets, that were of old? That they had trial of cruel mockings, and scourgings; yea moreover of bands and imprisonment; they were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.

Heb. ii. 37.

Moreover they scourged and crucified the Lord of Glory; they put him to an open shame. Neither were the disciples above their master, or the servants above their Lord; after scourgings, and bands, and imprisonments, and many a sad and barbarous usage, St. James was knocked on the head, S. Peter was crucified, S. Paul was beheaded, and the rest were used accordingly.

Mat. 23. 33

Behold (saith God) I send un-

to you Prophets, and wise men,
and some of them ye shall scourge
in your Synagogues, and some of
them ye shall kill and crucifie.

If we diligently search the
Scriptures, and histories of the
Church, we shall find this to
have been generally the success
of the Word of God, and of his
Messengers ; instead of trembl-
ing, and penitence, and reforma-
tion, to be entertained with scorn,
and contempt, and persecution.

2. But it may be the Works
of God may have better success
upon the hearts of the children
of men ; his works of 1. Mercy,
or of 2. Judgment. The Apostle
tells us, that *God's patience and
forbearance leadeth men unto re-
pentance ;* And the Prophet,
that *when his judgments are a-
broad , the inhabitants of the*
Aa 3 World

Rom. 2. 4.

Isa. 26. 9.

World will learn righteousness.

Indeed a Logical man, reasoning upon Principles, will be apt so to conclude : But alas ! it is not so with men ; alas ! that so clear reasoning should be contradicted by evident experience and observation !

*Nay they despise the riches of
Ro. 2. 4, 5. God's mercy, and treasure up
wrath against the day of wrath.*

*From the patience, and long-
animity of God they make per-
verse, and Atheistical conclusi-
Ps. 50. 21. ons ; when thou sawest a thief
thou consentedst unto him, and
hast been partaker with the adul-
terer ; ---these things hast thou
done and I kept silence, and thou
thoughtest wickedly that I am
such an one as thyself.*

*Because sentence against an e-
vil work is not executed speedily,
Eccl. 8. 11. there-*

therefore the heart of the Sons of men are fully set in them to do evil.

Solomon tells us, that *the prosperity of Fools shall destroy them*; and there are few so circumspect and wise, as not to stumble at this stone of stumbling. Neither Solomon's Wisdom, nor his Father's Piety could preserve them upright amidst the snares of prosperity. The danger as well as wickedness of this is intimated in Nathan's exprobration to David: *Thus saith the Lord the God of Israel; I anointed thee King over Israel; I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul, I gave thee thy Masters house, and thy Masters wives into thy bosom; I gave thee the house of Israel, & of Judah, wherefore hast thou killed Uriah, and taken his wife to be thy wife?*

PROV. 1. 35

2 Sam. 12.

Act 4

This

This was a temptation, which the Israelites never could withstand, notwithstanding all the Caveats given them by Moses :

Deut. 6. 12 *When the Lord shall bring thee into the good land ; and shall give thee cities and houses, which thou buildedst not, Vineyards, and Olive trees which thou plantedst not ; when thou shalt have eaten, and be full ; Then beware lest thou forget the Lord thy God.*

Deut. 32. 15 *But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked ; as the Lord multiplied his mercies, so they multiplied their transgressions : his prodigious and wonderful deliverances were answered with prodigious and wonderful ingratitude ; for they sinned yet the more and lightly esteemed the God of their Salvation.*

But if the mercies of God will
not

not prevail to draw men to repentance, surely his judgments cannot fail to drive them to it ; whether they are sent upon a city, or upon a man only : *Shall the Lion roar, and shall not the forest tremble? shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid?* Amos 3.6.

Behold therefore and tremble, and be afraid all ye that look upon Repentance as a slight and an easie duty ; and that deferr it for that reason : It is not every horrou and shaking, that will bring a man to Repentance. And the instances are many, wherein the judgments of God, instead of softning, or breaking the hearts of men, have hardened them yet more in a course of desperate impenitency.

Felix trembled, and said, Go thy way--- When

Dan. 5. 6.

When *Belsazzar* had plundered the house of God, and was making a debauch in the bowls of the Temple, the finger wrote upon the wall *MENE*. --- We read that *his countenance was changed, and an horrible trembling seised upon him: The joynts of his loyns were loosed, his knees smote one against another; But we do not read that he repented.*

As plagues were multiplied, so *Pharaoh's* heart was hardned, and he vowed *he would not let the people go.*

2 King. 3.
26.

When the King of *Moab* was in anguish, and in great distress, it was a warning to repent; but *he took his eldest son, and offered him for a sacrifice upon the wall.*

When the Philistines made war upon *Saul*, and God was
de-

departed; when he *was sore afraid*, and *his heart greatly trembled*; who would not expect, that he should have turned unto the Lord? But he betook him to *the witch of Endor*. 1 Sam. 28.

Of *Abaz* it is said, that *in the time of his afflictions he trespassed yet more* (*this is that King Abaz.*) 2 Chron. 28. 22.

And we read, that when a great hail fell from heaven, *Men blasphemed God because of the hail*. Apoc. 16. 21.

But if single mercies and judgments will not do, perhaps an intermixture of them may prevail; and indeed for a rational and probable means to bring men to repentance, the imagination and apprehension of man can go no higher than to such a case, where signal and remarkable

ble judgements are brought upon some ; and others are reserved, and set, as it were, upon a Scaffold, or a Theatre, in safety to behold the destruction, and plagues brought upon their Neighbours ;

---*Turbantibus æquora ventis
E terra magnum alterius spectare
laborem.*

So *Israel* beheld the Egyptians
Numb. 16. drowned in the Sea ; and *Corah*
and his complices swallowed in
the Land.

This is the case of those, whom
God preserves from plagues, and
famines, and desolations, making
them survivors and spectators of
the destructions brought upon
the world. And this was the case
of the persons in the Text ; this
one

one would think should never fail.

When he slew them, then they, (i. e. the remnant) sought him; ^{Psal. 78. 38.} and turned them early, and sought after God. Nay! but even this hath also too often failed; for even these did but flatter him with their lips, and dissemble. The Israelites, that were spectators of the drowned Egyptians, within three days fell to their wonted murmurings. The Spectators of Corah within one day returned to their rebellion. The Prophet Amos in the name of God complains of those that had escaped famine, and pestilence, and sword: I have overthrown some of you as God overthrew Sodom, ^{Amos 4 6.} and Gomorrha; and ye were as a fire-brand snatched out of the burning; yet have ye not turned unto

to me, saith the Lord. And this was the case of the persons in the Text; they were a remnant of men, which were not killed by the plagues brought upon others, yet they repented not.

Notwithstanding the wonder according to reason, we have seen the truth, and observed the frequency of such mens impenitency in common experience; it remains that we consider the consequence and issue of it, observable from the Text, as it stands in relation to the Antecedent parts, and the Catastrophe of this Vision: *They repented not--- And the seventh Angel sware, that there should be time no more (no more time for repentance, no longer reprieve of vengeance.)*

III. Such an obstinate impenitency is the great provocation of
of

of the wrath of God; such a final impenitency is the certain forerunner of final ruine, and destruction.

Though the Lord be patient, he is not of wood, or of stone; though he be slow to anger, yet he can be angry; and *who can stand before him, when he is angry?* Pfal. 76. 7.

It is true, that *the Lord is strong, and patient, and our God is provoked every day; he is long-suffering, and abundant in forbearance; though we do evil an hundred times, he prolongs our days.* Pfal. 7. 12. Eccl. 8. 12.

He is not extreme to mark what is done amiss: He considers that we are but dust; and as a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again. Pfal. 130. 3. Psal. 103. 14.

Many, and many a provocation
on

Lam. 3. on he passeth by; for, *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.*

Behold, he stands at the door and knocks; By his word, and by his works, and by his spirit striving to reclaim the sons of men; that he may keep their life from the pit, and their soul from perishing.

But if all this cannot prevail, what can reasonable men expect? or what would they have him do?

His Spirit shall not alway strive with men; his abused lenity, and his affronted longanimity will be turned into jealousy, and fiery indignation. For to him belongeth vengeance as well as mercie; and the God to whom vengeance, the God to whom vengeance belongeth will shew himself,

God

God will arise, and his enemies shall be scattered. He will awake as one out of sleep, he will rouse himself up as a Gyant refreshed with wine. He will smite his enemies in the hinder parts, and put them to a perpetual shame. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the mighty one of Israel; Ah! I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies.

Psal. 68. 1.

Psal. 78.

65.

I sai. 1. 24.

Concerning persons the Apostle tells us of a certain state, wherein there remains no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgement.

Heb. 10.

25.

Concerning Nations our Saviour tells of a certain measure of iniquity; Fill ye up the measure of your fathers; so false is that conceit, so dangerous is that imagination, that men can repent

Marth.

23. 32.

Prov. 1.
28.

at any time (at leastwise, whensoever they shall have a mind to it) *They shall call (saith God) but I will not answer, they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.*

Ezek. 20.
31.

As I live (saith the Lord) I will not be enquired of by you. Saul enquired of the Lord, he answered him not, neither by prophets, nor by Urim, nor by dreams.

Heb. 12.
17.

Esaü sought for repentance, but he found no place for repentance, though he sought it even with tears.

Apoc. 2.
21.

I gave her space to repent, but she repented not; behold I will cast her into great tribulations.

This is a case, which I tremble to insist upon: What tongue can express the misery of such a person, or such a people? How dreadful is this place! surely this is none other, than the gate
of

of Hell ; the entrance of all the miseries of this world, and of the world to come : 1. Temporal, 2. Spiritual, and 3. Eternal.

1. *The Lord shall send upon them cursing, and vexation, and rebuke, until they be destroyed, and perish quickly. They shall be cursed in all their interests and concernments, in their estates, in their credit, in their relations, in their persons : Cursed shall they be in the city, and cursed in the field ; cursed in the basket, and in the store. They shall become an astonishment, and a proverb, and a by-word, and a reproach among all their neighbours round about. Cursed shall they be in the wife of their bosom, and cursed in the fruit of their body. The Lord shall smite them with a consumption, and with a fever, with an inflam-*

Deut. 28: 20.

B b 2 mation,

mation, and with an extreme burning. He shall smite them with the botch of Egypt, and with the Emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch (with a botch that cannot be healed, from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head.)

Their carcase shall be meat for the fowls of the air, and for the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray them away.

2. Moreover, he shall pour out spiritual judgements upon them; he shall give them over to the wickedness of their hearts; he shall let them alone, that they may commit sin with greediness.

He shall send upon them a spirit of blindness, and hardness of heart, a spirit of slumber and carnal security.

Then

Then, when they have filled up the measure of their enormities, he shall smite them with *madness and astonishment*, with *terrors of conscience*, and *desperation*. Deut. 28. 28.

His arrows shall stick fast in them, and his hand shall press them sore; there shall be *no health in their bodies*, because of his *displeasure*; nor any *rest in their bones* by reason of their *sin*. Psal. 38. 2.

The iniquity of their heels shall take hold upon them; the *terrors of death* shall compass them about, and the *flouds of their ungodliness* shall make them afraid.

Every man that sees me, shall slay me, said cursed Cain: my *punishment is greater than I can bear*: I have slain a man in mine *anger*, and a young man to my *wounding*. If Cain shall be a- Gen. 4. 14. Gen. 4. 23.

venged seven fold, surely Lamech seventy times seven. Hearken unto me, ye wives of Lamech.---

They shall be weary of life, and wish for death; and hasten sometimes to break off their torments by tragical and fearful ends: *Fall thou upon me, and slay me, saith despairing Saul; Behold anguish is upon me, because my life is whole in me: Away with the wages of iniquity, cryed despairing Judas; and he be- took himself to the fatal halter and the tree.*

3. Yet all these are to the finally impenitent but *the beginnings of sorrow; the præludium* to those unutterable miseries, which are eternal; to *the worm which dyeth not, to the fire which never shall be quenched, to utter darkness, and everlasting burn- ings.*

ings. For they go down quick into hell.

As it is with persons, so it is with Nations, when *their iniquitie is full*; when once they have *filled up the measure of their abominations*; if none of all his methods will bring them to repentance; if they will not humble themselves; if they will not fear, if they will not turn from their evil ways, he will set *his face against them to destroy them*. Jer. 44. 11.

He will pour out blindness upon them also, and *the things be- longing to their peace shall be hid from their eyes*: He will do to them as he did to Shilo; he will take away their light; he will come quickly, and remove the candlestick out of its place. Jer. 7. 12.

He will give them over to the

B b 4 career,

career, and swinge of their abominations : *Ephraim is joyned to idols, let him alone.*

Though it be with violence to his nature, though it be with reluctance to his inclination (*O Ephraim ; how shall I give thee up O Ephraim !*) yet their numbers shall not defend them, their privileges shall not excuse them from destruction,

Jer. 22. 29. Though Coniah were as the signet upon my right hand, yet would

Jer. 31. 20. I pluck thee thence. Though Ephraim is his dear son ; though

Hos. 5. 4. Israel be a pleasant child ; though Judah is a pleasant plant ; yet if they will not frame their doings to turn unto the Lord, therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquities, and Judah also shall fall with them.

Ezek. 14. 20.

Though Noah, Daniel, and Job

Job were there, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter, but their own souls only.

For unnatural and extraordinary rebellions, he hath supernatural and extraordinary judgements: *The windows of heaven were opened, the cataracts were poured forth, and drowned the old world. Fire descended, and brimstone came down from heaven, and consumed the Cities of Sodom and Gomorrha. The earth, opened, and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the congregation of Abiram. The Sun stood still, till Joshua was avenged of the Lords enemies. The stars in their courses fought against Sifera.*

Pfal. 160.

17.

Jud. 5. 20.

For the usual, and ordinary impenitency of Nations, he hath his three fold national scourge, his judgements in ordinary; *The famine,*

famine, the pestilence, and the sword.

Ezek. 4.
16.

Sometimes he *breaks the staff of bread; and they shall eat bread by weight and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment; that they may want bread and water, and consume away in their iniquity.*

Joel 1. 17.

Their seed shall be rotten under the clods, their garners desolate, their barns broken down; their beasts shall groan, their cattle shall be perplexed; the flocks of sheep shall be made desolate.

Lam. 4. 5.

They shall eat their children of a span long; they that did feed delicately, shall be desolate in the streets; they that were brought up in scarlet, shall embrace dunghils.

Some-

Sometimes he sends forth his Plague *κατ' ἐξοχὴν*, the raging and the noisome pestilence, *the pestilence that walketh in darkness*, *the plague that destroyeth at noon day*, *Psal. 91. 6.*

He scatters infection like lightning; he casts forth his Contagion, and tears them in a moment; he shoots his poyson'd arrows, and consumes them. *Psal. 144. 6.*

Sometimes he gives commission to the sword to revenge the quarrel of his covenant, by intestine rebellions, or forreign invasions.

He suffers a fawning Absalom to steal away the hearts of the people from their Sovereign; or a cursed Sheba to blow a trumpet, and cry, *To your tents, O Israel*. *2 Sam. 15. 6. 2 Sam. 20. 1.*

He

He permits a spirit of giddiness, of fears and jealousies, and of fanatick wildness to inrage whole Nations, to tear the womb that bare them, to *destroy them, and their king.*

He causes *nation to rise against nation, and kindom against kindom*: He calls in the families of the North, he *hisses for the Assyrian, the rod of his anger.*

Isai. 10. 5.
7. 15.
Luk. 19.
43.

Behold (saith our Saviour) *the day is coming, when thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee on every side. Then all things shall be filled with plunder, and confusion, and garments roll'd in bloud.*

Esa. 34.
13, 14.

Her stately Palaces, her goodly Temple shall be destroyed. *The thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof, and it shall be an*

inhabitation for dragons , and a court for owls : -- The satyre shall cry to his fellows ; the owle, and the vulture to his mate : the scrichowle shall make its nest there. Faunes and satyres shall ^{Es. 13. 21.} *dance there.*

*Babylon is fallen, it is fallen !
Jerusalem is a place for dragons !*
Behold the reward of obstinate, and final impenitency ; behold the portion reserved for the persons in the Text.

When neither interest nor ingenuity, judgements nor mercies could work upon them ; when six Angels could not convert them ; nor six Trumpets awaken them ; nor six Judgements subdue them ; nor six preservations allure them to repentance.

Then

Then John beheld, and he
Apo. 10. saw another mighty angel, cloath-
1, 2, 6. ed with a cloud; and he set his
left foot upon the earth, and his
right foot upon the sea; and he
cryed, as when a lyon roareth;
and he lifted up his hand to hea-
ven, and sware by him that liveth
forever ---- That there shall be
time no longer.

AP.

APPLICATION.

I Have now done with the persons in the Text, and the observations arising from them. Suffer me for a word of Application, humbly to pray that ye will come near, and consider the things that have been spoken.

That ye will search the Scriptures, and see whether it be as you have heard, or no; that you will ponder the matter, and weigh the concernment of it; that ye will not hear it as a song, or slightly pass it by. *Is it nothing unto you, O all ye that pass it by?*

Hai. 44.
45.

I shall not undertake to make a precise Interpretation, or Application of this Vision of the seven Angels, and seven Trumpets; I know the destiny of the bold expositors of the *Apocalypse*. *He frustrateth the tokens of the lyars, and maketh diviners mad.*

The Vision indeed speaks of Angels and Trumpets, Gods Messengers, and his loud alarms; of plagues and preservations, of a remnant kept alive. It tells of extraordinary thunder and lightning; of blasting of grass, and of trees; of the death of hoves and cattel; of part of the Sea turned into bloud; of mountains of fire cast into the Sea, and a third part of the Ships destroyed: Of two unusual Stars or Comets; of
smoak

smoke issuing from the bottomless pit (it may be groundless fears and jealousies) of *Locusts*, which sometimes are said to *have no king*; but in this place to have *Abaddon*, or *Apollyon* for their King: It tells us of men killed by fire, and by smoke, and by brimstone (by gunpowder.)

Yet all these things shall not extort from me a literal and particular Application of this Vision to our selves: I know there are many things which cannot; I trust the sad Catastrophe shall not be so applied.

However methinks it may be lawful in a general way to quicken my self, and all that hear me, to examine our selves, touching the considerations laid

C c

be-

before us in reference both to our personal, and our national concernments.

Is there any one person that hears me this day, upon whom God hath not called aloud, and often that they would repent? with whom he hath not contended sundry ways, and in divers manners to turn them from the evil of their ways? By powerful instructions, and personal experiences; by signal mercies, and wonderful deliverances; by checks of conscience; by happy diversions, and wholesome disappointments; by a well-timed sickness; by *the wind*, which *bloweth where it listeth*, and thou bearest the sound thereof, and knowest not whence it cometh.

J. h. 38.

For

For God speaketh once, yea Job 33. 14. twice, though man perceiveth it not: In a dream, in visions of the night. Is there any man so stupid as not to have considered national invitations to repentance? the Angels and the Trumpets, the warnings of Gods Ministers, the loud alarms of his Providence, the interchanges and intermixtures of National mercies, and National judgements, which we have had?

Since the day that he brought Jer. 7. 25. our fathers out of Egypt, his Book hath been opened, his Trumpet hath given a certain sound; he hath sent his Messengers rising every day, and sending them.

The Lord gave the word, Psal. 63. great were the company of the

C c 2 Preachers;

Preachers ; precept hath been upon precept, line upon line.

Isa. 28.
10

Hath any Nation had the experiences which we and our fathers have had? Enquire from one end of the heaven to the other. *My song shall be of mercie, and judgement.*

Psal. 101.
1.

Concerning Gods own people once we read of it as a wonder, that *their land had rest forty years.* Twice forty years together God was pleased to deliver the land of our Nativity from forreign invasion, and domestick rebellion.

Judg. 3.
11.

He put to flight the armies of the aliens; he scattered the Armada's that called themselves invincible; *The virgin the daughter of Sion, laughed them to scorn; They came forth one way, and returned*

Heb. 11.
34.

Isa. 37.
22.

Deut. 28.
7.

turned seven : He disappointed the insolent invader ; he said, *he shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there ; nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it : The horse , and his rider were thrown into the sea.* ^{Isai. 37. 33.} ^{Exod. 15. 1.}

He disappointed the plots and stratagems of domestick traitors : *the gates of hell could not prevail ;* he suffered not their devilish machinations to succeed.

Peace and plenty, and the publick profession of the true Religion flourished ; there was *no decay , no leading into captivity , no complaining in our streets.* ^{Psal. 144. 14.}

No ! but there was *pride, and idleness, and fullness of bread ; the sins of her ancient sister Sodom ;* ^{Ezek. 16. 49.}

C c 3 the

the cry thereof went up to heaven, and suddenly we tasted of the fire of Sodom, and the brimstone of Gomorrha.

The bottomless pit was opened, and the smoke arose of absurd and groundless fears and jealousies; and the Sun and the Moon were darkened by reason of the smoke. And there came out of the smoke Locusts;

Rev. 9. 9. *Their faces were as the faces of men; they had breast-plates of iron; their sound was as many horses running to the battel: They had a king, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, in Hebrew Abaddon, in greek Apollyon.*

Twenty years the Nation lay under the dreadful scourge of war and confusion; the most horrible kind of war,
the

the most lamentable of confusions.

The fire came out of the bramble, and consumed the cedars of Lebanon : The anointed of the Lord was taken in their pits ; the breath of our nostrils, our king, and our princes were among the gentiles. The law was no more ; the prophets received no vision from the Lord. Hunted we were from form to form ; emptied from vessel to vessel ; scattered like the bones, which the prophet saw in the valley, which were very many, and very dry.

Jud. 9. 15.
Lam. 4. 20
Lam. 2. 9.
Jer. 48. 11.

When behold another interchange of providence, sudden and wonderful ! *There was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together ; bone unto his bone : loe ! sinews and flesh*

Ezek. 37.

Cc 4

came

came upon them, and the skin covered them; they were restored as at the first; breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, and were a great army.

Five years are not compleated since we are tryed again by such a miraculous restitution; indeed by an absolute resurrection.

And now since that time how various have been the mixtures, how quick and sudden have been the changes of his providence?

Luc. 13. 7. Three years he expected fruit of his barren fig-tree; he let it alone the fourth also, saying, *If it bear fruit, well; and if not, he seemed to say, I will cut it down.*

He called a destroying Angel; he put a new sword into his hand

hand, and with it a commission to kill, and to destroy his thousands, ten thousands, hundred thousands.

Who can express the horror of his execution, the terrors and consternations of them that did escape; the various complications of anguish and misery, torments and deaths of them that fell in the execution?

How did the city become solitary that was full of people? she sate as a widow, her children forsook her, her friends fled away from her, her streets were desolate, her houses were full of the noisome carcases of the slain. Lam. i. 1.

O that my head were waters, Jer. 9. 1; and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night, for the slain of the daughter

daughter of my people.

Rom. II.
22.

And now again, behold another interchange, the goodness as well as the severity of God, *towards them that fell severity, towards us goodness, if we continue in his goodness.*

He hath mingled mercy with his judgements; he puts the experiment to the utmost to try if yet we will repent.

He hath not suffer'd us *to fall into the hands* of man; not given us over into the hands of our insolent and barbarous enemies. He hath given victory to the King; he hath wonderfully preserved the person of his Royal Highness; he hath kept our Ships and Navies from destruction.

In a marvailous way of mercy
he

he hath sheltered our most gracious Sovereign, and his Royal Relations, and his whole Train and Family. Those noble and eminent persons both of Church and State, who to make themselves a stay and comfort to the poor and infected of the City, cheerfully and constantly exposed themselves to danger, he hath deliver'd from the snare of the hunter, and from the noisome pestilence. He hath given plenty.--

And lastly, he hath caused the destroying Angel to sheath his sword, and stay his hand. And we are met together a preserved remnant of men, that have not been killed by these plagues.

What shall we render?---

*O that men would therefore
praise*

Psal. 116.

12.

Psal. 107.

praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doth for the children of men.

Let us repent therefore, and turn from our evil ways; let us do no more foolishly, *lest a worse thing come unto us.* We have seen the danger of Impenitency, after so many Motives to Repentance.

Behold now *wisdom cries unto us, and utters her voice in this great and noble Congregation: How long ye simple ones will ye love simplicity, and ye scorers delight in scorning? Turn ye, turn ye at my reproof; for why will ye dye, ye house of Israel?*

Prov. i.
22

Never let it be said of us, which is here spoken of the persons of

of the Text, that *the rest of the men, which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands.*

F I N I S.
